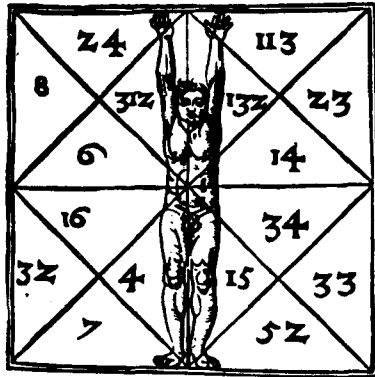


Commonweal



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THE CONTEMPORARY AND CHRISTIAN CONTEXTS

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A PASTORAL HYPOTHESIS

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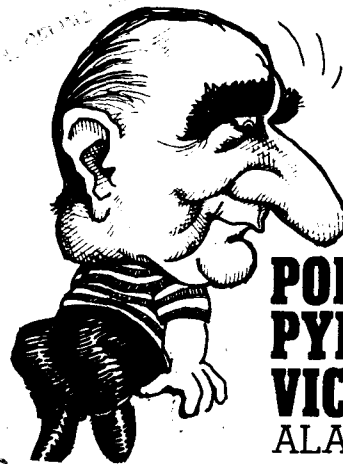
GERALD WEALES

HARRISBURG: PICKING UP THE

ROBERT BLAIR KAISER

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POMPIDOU'S PYRRHIC VICTORY

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NEWS & VIEWS

Saving the Bicentenary

The fiasco that has been the planning for the bicentennial celebration of America in 1976 receives some gentle, upper-class lampooning in *The Economist*, Britain's prestigious news weekly.

The Economist spears the commercialism (new flavored ice creams: Betsy Ross Twirl, Mount Vernon Cherry Pecan, Valley Forge Rum Ration); the taste (Casper the Friendly Ghost being renamed Casper the Spirit of '76 for a TV series called "Red, White and Boo"); the pocket-lining (last August, there were 87 people serving on the part-time American Revolution Bicentennial Commission, 21 receiving more than \$30,000 a year).

The American Revolution Bicentennial Commission was established in 1966 to "plan, develop, encourage, and coordinate activities" for the Bicentennial. For seven years of planning, developing, encouraging, coordinating, it has to show what *The Economist* in a notable bit of understatement terms a "general lack of accomplishment." It didn't even come up with a Bicentennial city; it hoped to land Philadelphia, but Philadelphia opted out when it discovered what the honor was going to cost.

So the American Revolution Bicentennial Commission was allowed to die a quiet death (some of its members lucky to escape formal charges of political and commercial impropriety).

But the Bicentennial is still with us. You no doubt noted that last month, when Richard Nixon was killing off job-opportunity, health and welfare programs by the yard, he sent to the Congress draft legislation for an independent government agency called the American Revolution Bicentennial Administration, to be generously staffed and funded and headed by a full-time administrator.

Like it or not, the Bicentennial's going to be a gala. There may be no more jobs in '76 than there are today, but the unemployed have pageants and fireworks to look forward to. And if the poor of '76 have no bread to eat, then there'll be cake, like special Bicentennial cakes from the kitchens of Sara Lee. (Sara Lee's chairman, James A. Schlindwein is bidding to bake "the nation's official birthday cake for the President to cut," with miniatures for the mobs, thus "allowing all citizens to share tangibly in our nation's birthday celebration.") Oh, 1976 promises to be a Walt-Disney year.

The one sensible note in all of this is being struck by a countergroup called the People's Bicentennial Commission. The People's Commission originally described itself as "red, white and blue Left," but has changed that in order to broaden its base of support. It hasn't copped out, however. It calls its program "The Patriot's program"; the government's, "The Tory's Program."

Specifically, the People's Bicentennial Commission seeks to raise the Bicentennial observance above Nixonian values and commercial boondoggles by stimulating a renewed understanding and commitment to the democratic ideals that shaped the birth of America, and which got lost or diluted along the way.

Toward this end, the People's Commission is sponsoring a wandering theater group, preparing articles on little-known details of history (Helen Keller's radicalism;

Davy Crockett's opposition to West Point), readying a television interview with Thomas Jefferson, and focusing attention on the Bill of Rights.

For \$7 it is offering a packet of materials that will help people form counterBicentennial groups in individual communities. The packet can be had by writing the People's Bicentennial Commission, 1346 Connecticut Ave., NW, Washington, D.C., 20036.

The packet seems a good buy, the more so since it is the only thing on the market at the moment that seems likely to rescue the Bicentennial from becoming a celebration of Nixon's mawkish political philosophy.

Theologies in Conflict

According to Latinamerica Press, an "organized conspiracy" appears underway in Latin countries to do in the Theology of Liberation, so popular with church progressives anxious to end neo-colonialism, upgrade human rights, and improve the economic status of the continent's poor.

The "conspiracy" is reportedly being spearheaded by Father Roger Vekemans, S.J., a Belgian who left Chile when Salvadore Allende won election as President.

He is alleged to be working with friends within the Latin American Bishops' Council (CELAM), especially its secretary-general, Alfonso López Trujillo, Auxiliary Bishop of Bogota.

Vekemans' tactic is to equate the Theology of Liberation with a theology of

revolution and violence. "It is already preaching the 'revolution' of the church," he maintains, "contesting her hierarchical authority and reducing her teachings to simple circumstantial writings, considered obsolete, if not counterrevolutionary."

The "saddest thing" about the process, he adds, is that it has caught up not merely militant priests, but "several theologians of renown" and some "weak authorities."

America in Action

ASHBY, Mass.: At the annual town meeting March 13, voters debated a motion to invite members of minority groups into Ashby. The vote was a decisive 148 to 79—against.

DALLAS, Tex.: This city plans "one of the largest shows ever produced in America" to honor its veterans of Vietnam. The planning is in the hands of James Skinner, director of halftime shows of the Dallas Cowboys.

NEW YORK, N.Y.: Personnel of a local abortion clinic have set up a corporation for the management of abortion centers across the country. The operation will function under the name Tender Care, Inc.

Odds and Ends

—Maybe it says something about the state of Catholic book publishing in the U.S.; maybe it doesn't. But among the 109 titles nominated for this year's National Book Awards, only one could be described as a specifically American Catholic book: Garry Wills' *Bare Ruined Choirs*. And it was nominated, not in the Philosophy and Religion category, but in Contemporary Affairs.

—This week's history lesson from Billy Graham: "Neither am I a White House 'chaplain'—any more than Francis Cardinal Cushing was during the Kennedy years. . . ." Double fault Graham on that one.

JOHN DEEDY



CORRESPONDENCE



One More Time

Cambridge, Mass.

To the Editors: The various letters which were written in response to my article, "Is Celibacy Eschatological?" (Feb. 2) showed such poor understanding of the contents and purpose of this article that I am afraid that they will have the effect of totally obscuring the issues. These letters took the form, primarily, of religious defending the traditional rationales for their way of life by attempting in various ways to attack my 'spirituality' or moral character. This is an irrelevant endeavor. I feel the need to restate the issues of this article.

1) This article was addressed primarily to those for whom the anthropology of traditional celibacy has already broken down, but who still remain institutionally tied to celibate institutions. The critics of this article do not understand this fact. Nor do they seem to realize that growing numbers of such people are already or are considering the possibility of entering into sexual relationships, while remaining in a celibate identity. Various arguments are emerging to justify this as something which does not contradict celibate identity. One favorite way of doing this is to say that the essence of celibacy is uncommitment to any one person. One can enter into sexual relations and remain in a celibate identity as long as this is not a 'committed relationship.' (!)

These rationalizations are not fully honest. They are psychologically dangerous and tend to fall away toward human exploitation. I speak here from a year's counseling with a woman who was one of two mothers of children of a priest, plus various other general experience. The traditional essence of celibacy was sexual continence, not simply the unmarried state. The very character of this ethic presumed sexual repression as intrinsically good. Such an identity cannot be honestly com-

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THE HOMOSEXUAL AND THE CHURCH

The Christian church was meant to be an open community, a home for all people drawn by the gospel to a love of God through Jesus. Yet, for a number of reasons—some rooted in the fears, misconceptions and prejudice of a larger sexually insecure society, some in the former over-negative sexual rigorism of our moral theology, some in the still unsolved mysteries of personal development, some in the valid preeminent positions Christian tradition has given to married love and celibacy—men and women who happen to be homosexuals are often cut off from the life of the church.

Science, history, literature and theology have not adequately explained the origins of homosexuality. We do not know to what degree a man's sexual preferences are determined genetically, disturbed by destructive parental relationships, redirected through adolescent encounters, or consciously decided by a series of mature choices. This is a mystery as deep as the human personality and perhaps as unfathomable as what we sometimes call God's will. But we do know that where there is social discrimination, injustice and alienation, the church must be there too as a healing force. We know too that we can neither solve this personal mystery nor integrate the homosexual into the larger community by merely condemning "unnatural acts" (especially if for some individuals sexual orientation may not come from a free choice) or by uncritically baptizing so-called "gay" propaganda. But there are several things the church can do.

In its social statements the church can urge civil-rights legislation prohibiting discrimination based on sexual orientation in employment, housing, public accommodations and services. It can start counseling and educational programs that can help homosexuals grow in self-respect and self-love and also help so-called "straight" society break down its popular caricatures of homosexuals as "perverts," "swishes," child molesters, or subversives somehow vaguely allied with the Communist conspiracy or Nazi decadence. It is sick and tragic that American fear of homosexuality is so irrational as to make some people suspicious of sincere affection among men and easy pawns of small-minded political demagogues who play on popular distrust of "effeminacy" to slander their enemies. The church should also require its theologians to cooperate with sex researchers, other medical and social

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scientists, and hetero- and homosexual Christians in a new effort to reformulate guidelines for Christian sexual behavior. We expect that the Christian community would rightly uphold the sacredness of sexual love that finds its most appropriate expression in marriage, and continue to teach against the popular abuses (hetero- and homosexual) of our powers of loving—infidelity, exploitive sex, promiscuity, sex without commitment, and that moral individualism that disregards the ethics of the larger community. Recently, some Catholic moralists have seen certain situations in which heterosexual activity outside marriage need not always be morally wrong; and some have also cautiously agreed in the professional journals that under certain conditions, which may differ with each individual, a Catholic homosexual can enter an active homosexual relationship and still receive the sacraments and live a life of sexual love which does not necessarily separate him from the love of God. Now this emerging new understanding must be examined and explained, so that homosexuals may see their true home not in a “gay,” necessarily limited, church or in the cultural prison of the homosexual underground, but in the Christian church where all are brothers and sisters in Christ.



Pyrrhic Victory For France's Pompidou

“On Monday, they throw artichokes into the yard of the *préfecture*; on Tuesday, they throw potatoes; on Wednesday, they set up road-blocks; on Thursday, they break windows; on Friday, they block the Avenue de l'Opéra and hurl abuse at the Minister of Finance; on Saturday, I'm not sure what they do; but on Sunday, they vote for the government! Don't laugh, you Bretons are not the only ones to act in this way!”

Those ironic words, spoken by M. François Mitterand, leader of the Socialist party, at the beginning of February during his electoral tour of Brittany, are a fair commentary on the recent parliamentary elections, which revealed once again inherent French conservatism.

After a great deal of Gallic agitation, mud-slinging, accusation and counter-accusation, speechifying, threatening, pleading and prognosticating, the final results of the first parliamentary elections to be held since the death of de Gaulle, founder of the Fifth Republic, have produced a National Assembly almost identical to the one elected six years ago, in 1967.

Seven main parties, or political groupings, put up candidates in the recent elections. They are: the Communist party, the Socialist party, the Unified Socialist party (PSU), the Reformers (Réformateurs), UDR

(Gaullist), the Independent Republicans and the Modern Progress and Democracy party (PDM). The first two of these, together with a group of left-wing Radicals, formed the “Union of the Left” last June, when they published a “common program of government.” The last three formed a political alliance under the label “Union of Republicans for Progress” (URP).

There were also a number of extreme left- and right-wing candidates, plus a few standing independently, but, to simplify things, one can say that the major battle was fought between the Communist-Socialist coalition (respectively 473 and 436 candidates, presented separately at the first ballot, and the single, best-placed candidate at the second) and the right-wing URP alliance (presenting a total of 516 candidates, of whom 339 were Gaullist UDR). The Reformers, with 417 candidates, offered a third choice appealing to middle-of-the-road voters, and in fact theirs was the deciding vote which allowed a right-wing victory.

Now for the results. The first round showed a marked lead by the combined forces of the left (42.2 percent of the vote) over the outgoing majority (37.1 percent), the Reformers obtaining 12.4 percent. The fight was a very near thing in many constituencies, with only 55 candidates elected outright and all the others remaining “en ballottage” (i.e. lacking the required number of votes). Not one deputy was elected in Paris. Sustaining heavy losses, as compared with 1968 and even 1967, the Gaullist-led majority, which had 375 seats in the outgoing assembly, looked as though it were in danger of losing so many seats that it might even drop below the 246 needed for outright control. Although the left had gained about 4 percent over the results of the 1967 first round, the massive advance of the Union of the Left predicted by the over-sanguine did not take place, and the outcome of the second round hinged almost entirely on the attitude of the Reformers.

On the eve of this decisive ballot, President Pompidou addressed the nation. He did not mince his words, but put all his weight—and he has put on quite a bit recently—in the Gaullist balance. “The choice is simple,” he stated bluntly. “On the one hand you have Marxist Communism and its allies, and on the other—all the rest. On the one hand, a society which ignores or suppresses individual freedom, political freedom, the right to property, and which places the individual in the power of a totalitarian party; on the other hand, a free society—with its imperfections and injustices, it is true—but which respects individual rights and allows everyone to use what he has acquired as he sees fit.”

In spite of its threadbare condition and antiquated dress, the “Communist bogey”—favorite weapon in the Gaullist armory for bringing the bourgeoisie to heel—was trundled out yet again, with the desired effect. The French obviously prefer the devil they know to one they don't. Polling had been high on March 4, with a turnout

of 81.22 percent, but it was even higher on March 11, reaching 81.80 percent. It was the first time in the history of French politics that abstentions were lower for the second ballot than the first.

Thanks to the massive support of the Reformers' votes, the URP kept their majority, with a comfortable 30 seats to spare, so that they will not even need the backing of the Reformer deputies to govern. As the daily newspaper *Combat* wrote, "The Reformers are not even sure of receiving the mess of pottage for which they sold their birthright." Final results (for 487 seats out of the 490) are as follows: Majority (URP) 275 seats, with 46.23 percent of the vote; Left 176 seats (Communist 73, Socialists 100, PSU 3) with 46.88 percent of the vote; Reformers 31 seats; others 5 seats. Because of the gerrymandering mentioned above, the left needs considerably more votes than the majority to control the assembly.

Although the majority had less difficulty than it had feared in retaining power, it lost 100 seats, including two of its key ministers, Foreign Minister, Maurice Schumann and Minister of Justice, René Pleven (of which the UDR Gaullists alone lost 89 and no longer have the absolute majority within the majority), whereas the Socialists gained 48 seats, the Communists 39 and the Reformers 16. The political scene has more or less reverted to what it was in 1967, but there are a number of lessons to be learnt from these elections which the Gaullists would do well to ponder.

The first is a clear warning. At the first ballot, which gives the clearest photograph of public opinion, a sizable majority of the electorate—almost two-thirds—voted against the outgoing majority. If the left finally lost, it was partly through fear of Communism—as was clearly shown by the refusal of a certain number of Socialist voters even to toe the party line and vote Communist when their own candidate had stepped down, and partly as a result of the swing to the right of the Reformers' vote in the second round.

The writing is nonetheless on the wall: the majority of the French population desires a change. And the Gaullist leaders have admitted as much; after the elections, M. Messmer, the Prime Minister, agreed that "the country has manifested its desire for renewal" and M. Pompidou spoke of the need for "courageous reforms." But words are not enough, and if they do not keep their promise it will be at their peril.

Secondly, the elections show a marked trend towards "bi-polarization" in French politics: the Gaullists and their allies on the right against the Communists and the Socialists on the left, or, as M. Pompidou put it, "the Union of the Left against all the others." This move towards a two-party system is new for France and is a factor of stability. In spite of de Gaulle's disappearance and M. Mitterand's contention that "the Gaullists' Pyrrhic victory marks the death of Gaullism," the URP has

proved that it exists as a major party, supported by all classes of society, comparable to the Italian Christian Democratic party and the British Conservative party.

The victory of the Gaullists was greeted with relief by most of the European and foreign capitals, who are anxious above all to ensure the continuing stability of France, which seemed threatened by a leftist victory. But, France's foreign policy may well be modified by the new distribution of forces within the assembly. Traditional Gaullist policy has been to promote the creation of a strong and independent Europe, based on an economic and monetary union and leading to political union in 1980. But stress was always laid on national sovereignty and on the need for a national nuclear deterrent, with no question of returning to NATO.

The Reformers, however, who will now constitute a parliamentary group since they have won over 30 seats, are in favor of a supranational government for Europe and an elected assembly; they also support the creation of a common European defense force. In any case, after M. Schumann's defeat, a new Minister for Foreign Affairs will have to be found, and the nomination of a centrist minister could very well be one way of operating the "opening towards the center" promised more or less explicitly to the Reformers by the leaders of the majority during the transactions that took place between the two ballots.

Finally, a word about the part played by Christians in the elections. In recent years there has been a gradual swing towards the left within the Catholic electorate—traditionally right-wing—and this is especially true of the priests. A recent survey conducted among French priests of under 40 revealed that 26 percent intended to vote for the majority, 10 percent for the Reformers and 64 percent for the left (of which 42 percent for the Socialist party and 7 percent for the Communist party).

These surprising statistics obviously do not reflect the Catholic electorate as a whole. A survey held a month before the elections showed that 1 percent of practicing Catholics and 18 percent of *militants* intended voting Communist, as opposed to 10 percent and 24 percent, respectively, Socialist, 14 percent and 16 percent Reformer and 70 percent and 43 percent Gaullist. It remains significant, however, that the gains made by the Socialist party took place especially in traditionally Catholic areas, where religious practice is high, such as Alsace and Brittany.

In spite of all this, the Frenchman remains a conservative at heart, for all his griping and revolutionary talk, and it looks as though the artichoke-thrower will continue quite happily demonstrating from Monday to Friday and voting for the government on Sunday. There is a proverb, peculiar—as far as I know—to the French, which says: *Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose!*

ALAIN WOODROW

THE NEW HUMANITIES

MICHAEL NOVAK

"What do you do there?" strangers ask about my new job. "Humanities," I say. A glaze slides across their eyes.

Recall all the college catalogs you've read and it's easy to understand: third-rate sentiments about the glories of liberal education, values, civilization—beautiful words about *being* and *doing*, authenticity and crisis and wisdom. Remember, then, all the books utterly destroyed by the niggling of professionals. Oh God, how often one wanted to vomit as an absolute pygmy criticized Dostoevsky as if he were Dostoevsky's superior, and in his life gave no sign whatever of coming anywhere close to the depths Dostoevsky wrote of.

Recall, too, how often the "humanities" were pressed down upon one's soul from above, by missionaries from some other world. They did not heed one's own family and neighborhood experiences, knew none of the sounds or smells or doubts or agonies of one's own native world. They tried to indoctrinate one into "universal" experience, better, higher, more real than one's own. There it was, *out there*: culture. Put it on. Cover your nakedness with it.

Such a view of the humanities is an alienation of the human spirit. Culture is not, in fact, "outside" people or "above" people. It is already within us. Culture is to be located, not precisely in our words or declarations or artifacts, but in our imaginations, hearts, bodies, minds: in our gestures, perceptions, actions. Brought to consciousness, shaped, criticized, *these* become the substance and grounding of our ideas. Ideas out of touch with them are lies, and these, out of touch with ideas, unexamined.

The humanities do not exist in books. They exist in persons. And not solely in individuals but, more accurately, in the cultural histories within which individuals live, move,

and have their being. Communities are prior to individuals—in language, sensibility, imagination, emotional pattern, networks of ideas. Only gradually does an individual become conscious of the full, complex identity long nourished in his soul by traditions he did not choose. A cultural inheritance surrounds us as we grow.

Indeed, a many-cultured inheritance. For "the humanities" are not merely "western civ." They are the ways of life and the achievements of spirit of all the peoples of the earth. Today, the immense variety of this planet disrupts our own experience. We are not permitted to ignore other cultures, other perceptions, other ways of life.

No person is infinite. No one can receive every part of planetary experience equally or even accurately. We are each only ourselves, quite finite and angular. Yet our very selves face new possibilities, are attracted to new ranges of experience and symbol and insight, are slowly (very slowly) nourished by ways of life our grandparents hardly found accessible. We can become planetary in our awareness, not by pretending to universality, but by patiently uniting who we will be to who we have been. Faithful to a past, voyaging into a future.

There is a great discrepancy, then, between what "the humanities" have been and what they must become, between the old humanities and the new. Characteristically, even within Western civilization, the humanities have been transformed in each new cultural era: when Greek culture encountered Hebrew, for example; when Mediterranean culture knew fear under the invasion of Northern culture; when new inventions and a new economic order shifted dominance toward Northern Europe.

Today, powerful currents of ex-

perience run through our daily lives, which professionals studying in the humanities have not yet incorporated in their vision. The old humanities do not reflect humanity, only a segment of it. To name but a few areas of unabsorbed experience: to watch television is to live within a scientific and technological organism, deeply affected in one's imagination and physiology; to be a woman is to recognize, even if dimly, that many prevailing cultural symbols are askew; to be one of the lower classes—or from regions of low status ("I come from West Virginia")—is to feel the weight of a foreign culture, that of the northeastern upper class.

There are many vitalities and energies in the many American cultures, about which our educated classes know next to nothing. The gaps in our intelligence and sensitivity are intolerable. What we at present call "the humanities" is only a patch of human reality.

Arguments about "the humanities" frequently pose several false antinomies. "Which do you choose," people ask, "high standards, excellence, elites—or mass culture, inarticulateness, low performance?" It is as though one had to choose between democratic values and aristocratic values. The truth is that one may learn to reverence the thick human reality of every culture, however "low" or "populist" or "underdeveloped," and to do so with the utmost exactitude and discrimination; *and also* one may cherish the highest values and standards, and the most delicate perceptions, of the most talented artists and scholars. There is no contradiction between applying one's best intelligence to every person and culture one meets, and applying it to the best works of human genius. Indeed, there is between these two the

(Continued on page 118)

THE CONTEMPORARY AND CHRISTIAN CONTEXTS

TOM F. DRIVER

The social context for thinking about homosexuality has changed

We may as well start with a few signs of the times.

1. A dozen years ago, some students at Union Theological Seminary, where I teach, invited Robert W. Wood, author of *Christ and the Homosexual*, to speak. The then president of the school was out of town. When he returned to face the prospect of an outspoken gay contingent in his student body, he summoned his faculty into session extraordinary and demanded they endorse his proposal to expel all homosexuals unless they undertook therapy. The faculty refused.

2. In 1971 the now president of the same school quietly (though not without some urging) announced as policy that no faculty, student, nor staff member would be discriminated against in any way because of sexual preference.

3. In 1972 the editors of *Commonweal* send me for review five new books about gay liberation.* Later they ask me instead to write an article on "The Christian and the Homosexual." I wonder if they mean that the categories are mutually exclusive.

4. On the day I begin to compose the article I re-

ceive in my mail an open letter to the Union Seminary Community:

Metropolitan Community Church (MCC) of New York and its national parent body, the Universal Fellowship of Metropolitan Community Churches, are important manifestations of an emerging Christian spirit among members of the second largest minority in the nation, the hitherto-hidden gay community. Founded in Los Angeles in October 1968 by a young minister named Troy Perry, the "gay church" there quickly grew from twelve persons to a current average weekly attendance of well over 1,000. . . .

The writer, Howard R. Wells, Pastor of MCC New York, goes on to speak of "homosexuals embracing Christ's spirit without rejecting their God-given sexual identity." God-given? That's laying a lot on God, but it reminds me that many heterosexual males seem to regard their masculinity as a divine endowment. Maybe we need a theology of sexuality, not just sex.

5. In the municipal, state, and Congressional elections of 1970, the Gay Activists Alliance in New York City campaigned vigorously on behalf of candidates who publicly supported equal rights for homosexuals, or who responded favorably to a GAA questionnaire. Twenty-four out of thirty-six winners had GAA support, including the following who gave "particularly strong support": Bella Abzug, Edward Koch, Antonio Olivieri, Albert Blumenthal, Shirley Chisholm, and Stephen Solarez. Gay Activist Marc Rubin has further noted that "statistical analysis of the State Senatorial and State

* *Homosexual: Oppression and Liberation*, by Dennis Altman (Outerbridge & Dienstfrey, \$6.95). *Dancing the Gay Lib Blues: A Year in the Homosexual Liberation Movement*, by Arthur Bell (Simon and Schuster, \$5.95). *On Being Different: What it Means to be a Homosexual*, by Merle Miller (Random House, \$4.50). *Homosexual Liberation: A Personal View*, by John Murphy (Praeger, \$5.95). *The Gay Militants*, by Donn Teal (Stein and Day, \$7.95). I have also read at this time *Sexuality and Homosexuality: A New View*, by Arno Karlen (Norton, \$15), and *The Christian Male Homosexual*, a series of three articles by John J. McNeil, S.J., published in 1971 in *The Homiletic and Pastoral Review*.

TOM F. DRIVER is a professor of theology and literature at Union Theological Seminary in New York.

Assembly races produced an interesting fact: Where only one of the two major-party candidates supported us, he usually won his election. Seventy-four percent of such races were won by candidates who added their support of homosexual rights to their campaign policies. Political support for these rights was not, therefore, the kiss of death that many people thought it would be; it turned out to be an asset.”*

Until I read the books on gay liberation that *Commonweal* sent me, I had not realized the extent to which the social context for thinking about homosexuality has changed. All the writers agree that the movement came awake in the summer of 1969. On June 28, New York police raided the Stonewall Inn on Christopher Street, a bar catering to homosexuals. Such raids are expected from time to time. They are part of a charade in which the police pretend to uphold morality while also maintaining convenient arrangements with the underworld operators of gay bars. At the Stonewall that night, however, the customers fought back. Somehow or other they got the police to barricade themselves inside the place while the gays barraged it from outside with flying bottles, cans, bricks and what-not. In this act of rebellion the gay community surfaced politically and has not been the same since.

The Stonewall incident is a convenient peg, but it is far from being a cause of gay militancy. The Mattachine Society (begun in 1950) and the Daughters of Bilitis (founded 1955) were forerunners in somewhat the same sense as the Civil Rights Movement was a forerunner of Black militancy. Just as there is a division between those Blacks who favor the “civil” strategies of SCLC or NAACP and those who support the militancy of the Panthers, so the gay community is divided between old-liners like Mattachine and militants like Gay Liberation Front. In social terms it is best to say that the gay liberation movement represents an assertion of group identity through protest in much the same spirit of reckoning that has also given rise to Black Power and women’s liberation. All, in turn, are indebted to the rise of Third World consciousness, and they share an antipathy to control of the world’s resources and mores by the White (heterosexual) males of Europe and America.

Gay liberation, therefore, forces us to consider homosexuality not only as a psychological, moral and religious question but also as a political one. These four aspects, however, are not easily separable. If homosexuality is a psychological illness, society has reason to treat of it politically by strategies of containment and cure. If it is immoral (like murder or rape) society has the political right to punish it. And if it is a religious offense, the churches have a duty to withhold their sanction.

* See Donn Teal, *The Gay Militants*, p. 262.

The apologists for gay liberation whom I have read are unanimous in their condemnation of psychoanalysts and religionists. They understand both groups to be moralistic and repressive—the analysts mainly because of Freud’s doctrine that heterosexual genitality is the norm of sexual health in the adult, and the religionists because they use Scripture and dogma to forbid homosexual love. The analysts and the religionists are thus seen together as the *raisonneurs* of an oppressive society which systematically deprives the homosexual minority of its civil rights through harassment, ostracism, job discrimination, oppressive laws and imprisonment.

Recent liberal opinion has attempted to “neutralize” homosexuality in a political sense. It was Mrs. Patrick Campbell, I am told, who said of homosexuals, “I don’t care what they do as long as they don’t do it in the street and frighten the horses.” The famous Quaker Study in 1962 affirmed that what was done in private by consenting adults was none of society’s business, and this was also the burden of the Wolfenden Report, which led to the reform of English law on the matter.

However, so neat a distinction between public and private sexuality cannot long hold. It is theoretically weak because it violates the integrity of person, allowing in private a sentiment of which all public acknowledg-



ment is forbidden. And it is pragmatically weak because it never knows where to draw the line.

The moral truth of the matter is that society cannot hold to a “positive” attitude toward heterosexuality (to be rewarded with legal and religious blessing in marriage) while simultaneously holding to a “neutral” attitude toward homosexuality (to be denied social sanction yet tolerated by non-prosecution). If it tries to do so, it denies the homosexual all social identity; and this, as is now fully recognized by gay spokesmen, is tantamount to social prosecution, even if the police do not harass and the law does not condemn. If you deprive my sexual life of social recognition, you force me to a life of shame. No heterosexual faces such ignominy. It were better to prosecute the homosexual than to tell him that his sexuality, if he hides it, is of no matter.

If a person’s sexual identity is denied social sanction, he will appeal elsewhere—to nature, God, or the Devil. But the human being is never simply that or that. The

appeal to nature, God, or Devil is futile because none (of itself) takes proper account of freedom, which pertains to sexuality as much as to any other human quality. The domain of human freedom (always related to responsibility) is society. The human question of sexuality is the question of sex in social life. Anything we say about sex in nature or sex in the eyes of God lacks human significance until it is placed in the context of "life together." When gay liberation makes homosexuality a *political* matter, it makes it also a properly human and theological one.

American society seems to be moving away from the prosecution of homosexuality. Illinois and a few other states have eliminated laws forbidding homosexual practice among consenting adults, and New York City has, under pressure from organized gays, ceased entrapment by the police and most other forms of harassment. This trend will probably continue, along with the general sexual permissiveness, unless there occurs a puritanical backlash; and this is not likely except as part of a right-wing political move. Gay liberationists are correct in thinking that the treatment of homosexuals is an index of the degree of liberty in the country.*

This being so, the attitude of the churches is important. A backlash of moral indignation against homosexuals would require the endorsement of religious spokesmen. This it would surely get unless the churches and their leaders move now, while they can, to remove from homosexuality the religious condemnation under which it has for so long lived. The question is: can the Christian affirm homosexuality as a valid behavior and way of life?

In raising this question, I am not asking about all the things that often go along with homosexuality, no more than an apologia for heterosexuality need defend everything that is associated with it. I do not speak here of sado-masochism, "camp" style, the ambience of gay bars and porno movie houses, child molestation, etc., etc. All these have their heterosexual parallels. I speak only of the human and theological validity of the sexual love of a person for another of the same sex.

The fear that homosexuality, were it condoned, would spread through the population like an epidemic is probably not well grounded. It were a curious anthropology to think that sexual appetite is mainly directed toward the same sex and has to be channeled toward the opposite by social and religious pressure. Without a social taboo against it, homosexuality would, in my guess, manifest a temporary rise and then a marked decline. Meanwhile, we would probably see and hear a good deal of bisexual imagination and behavior. This is the

opinion of Denis Altman in *Homosexual*, the best written and best argued of the recent books I have read.

Bisexuality, I would further guess, is the church's deepest sexual fear, the possibility that is most threatening to the church's ancient sexual negativity. The reasoning, if spelled out, would run as follows:

"The best of all sex is sublimated sex (celibacy). But in order to preserve the race there exists a tolerable sexuality (hetero) in marriage. So say Paul, Augustine, most of the Fathers, and the tradition. Of this suitable and divinely sanctioned sex there exists a perversion, the love of men for men and women for women. It is as cursed as the other is blessed, and in condemning it we bear testimony to the estate of marriage which Our Lord blessed at Cana. Thus we can see that good and evil are symmetrical.

"Now there come those saying that the sexual loves of people are not clear but confused. Men may love men, women may love women, *and* the same men and women may love each other. This is as much as to say that all sexual love is good, and that its form does not matter. When homosexuals proclaimed that their love was best, we understood them, for they were but devils calling the worst best. But now profligates arise and say there is no best, that all is allowed to whosoever loves. This strikes at our doctrine of celibacy, for within its chastity we *do* say that all love is good, but these are saying the same from the vantage point of unchastity. If we agreed with them, we should have to admit that sexual lust is not bad, that the sublimation of sex is not ideal, that love is free to find its own way. What would happen to marriage? What evil thoughts would fill our picture of Heaven? We must defend ourselves against this most awful persuasion of sexual anarchy."

Had I written on homosexuality three or more years ago, I should not, in fact, have thought that the issue is the sanctity of marriage in its traditional regard. Today, however, both gay and women's liberation have arisen to say that marriage either is or has become a repressive institution. The Catholic church, in unwitting irony, agrees with this in forbidding its priests and nuns to marry, thus maintaining a witness to a "love" that is more free than marriage, less bound to temporal obligation.

So the old questions come round again, and we find ourselves having to think once more about sexual lust in relation to marriage. Augustine taught that lust should be avoided even between husband and wife, sex being for procreation, not pleasure. Vatican II attempted to recognize the validity of sexual pleasure in the cementing of the marriage bond. But the taint of evil remains, the deep, lingering conviction that sexual desire contradicts the love of God.

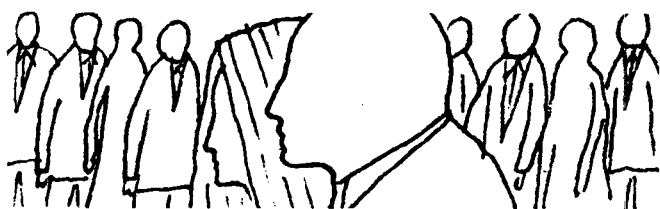
The moral posture of Christianity, then, is not merely to prevent sexual behavior that is harmful but to regulate it *en tout*, as if it were a disease to be kept under

* For this reason, Blacks, women and other liberationist groups ought not to scorn it, a point Huey Newton has seen and Eldridge Cleaver has not.

control. This leads to a hierarchy of sexual forms, a scale of perversions, which does achieve the desired effect—to inhibit the spontaneity of desire. Today the conflict between spontaneity and marriage is very great, and marriage is the loser.

I do not think we are being asked by either the gay or the women's movement to give up marriage. I think we are being asked to do three things, one compatible with tradition and two not:

1. We are being asked to think of marriage as a special vocation, thus not a natural, a religious, nor a social fate. This means that marriage should be chosen, not stumbled into, nor contracted because it is the expected thing. There are also other ways to live. This is what marriage has, in principle, meant all along. It is the sense behind the venerable doctrine (which the church took over from ancient Roman law) that the essence of marriage is the willing consent of the partners. We ought



not to grumble at having to relearn this basic principle from radicals.

2. Life outside marriage is not necessarily or even normally virginal. I doubt if it ever has been for most people, but there would have to have been a Kinsey in every age to prove it. In any case, to prove the opposite—that marriage means the moral right to have intercourse—is no easier. Here again we are being asked to consider marriage as the choice of a life together, not primarily or exclusively as a sexual arrangement.

3. Life inside marriage is not to be construed as forbidding sexual relations with other persons. If this seems to strike at the very foundation of marriage, that is because we have insisted on viewing marriage as a sexual contract, with the result that we do not care what sacrifices of personhood it requires, or else (more often) wink at the “indiscretions” that accompany it.

I do not call into question the teaching that marriage is a lifetime commitment, that its nature is exclusive, and that it is based upon fidelity. I wish only to question whether these concepts are rightly understood when they are taken to refer primarily and necessarily to sexual congress. Is it not instead the case, both in theory and in practice, that the validity of a marriage is judged by the intent and consent of the partners? What counselor, when hearing a case of adultery, would judge by the act committed rather than by the agent's testimony of love, concern and willingness to preserve the married relation? In these matters, to be sure, there is an important aspect known as “injury”; but this is not an absolute standard

unless the “injured party” is of an absolutist persuasion. Wise counselors learn that the greatest threat to marriage is, in fact, absolutism.

Far more important to marriage than adherence to rule is open communication between the partners, which implies trust, mutual respect and the partner's welfare as the highest good. To be sure, there can be little trust where the partners play by different rules. This leads us to see that the essence of rule (standard, law, norm, etc.) is its expression of a mutual understanding, its character as the terms of a faithful relation. Do the terms define the relation, or does the relation define the terms?

In a Christian frame of reference, it cannot be that terms, rules, or law define a relation. To think so is to confine gospel within law, whereas the good news of God in Christ is precisely deliverance from such a stage of bondage. From this good news regarding “the law” two possibilities flow: 1) The law is “dead.” The consequence drawn is antinomianism. There is some warrant for this conclusion in Christian tradition, but I do not follow it. There are several reasons why not, but the strongest is Jesus' own apparent respect for law. 2) Law has a valid place in human (and divine) life, but that place is relative. That is, the law serves a higher good; and when it does not, it alienates man from God.

“The Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath” is the most radical of all Jesus' ethical sayings. Transposing, we should say that marriage is made for men and women, not they for marriage. This is precisely the message of our friends in gay and women's liberation, and if we refuse that message we risk refusing it also from their brother in Christ.

My words, I realize, may be taken to offer license to all kinds of random behavior. While that is not my intention, I assume the risk. It is worth taking in order to rescue marriage from the legalism that has latterly beset it, for which we are paying the price of letting the divorce courts and not the church determine the essence, meaning, and purpose of marriage. In order to preserve this “holy estate” we must rediscover what is holy about it. That is to be found in its mutual love and not in its parallels with the laws of property.

The rise of homosexuality and bisexuality in society exerts a pressure on marriage that causes us to re-appropriate its meaning. If this is done, we are freed to recognize that the forms of sexual love do not matter when compared to the dignity of persons and their capacity for trust.

The gay liberation movement raises homosexuality to political consciousness. It prevents our regarding the topic as merely a “psychological problem” or a matter of “private morality.” It forces us to consider policy. The movement should have our thanks if it causes us to reconsider the policies of marriage, and most of all if it helps us to see that sexual plurality is the very scene and stage upon which are played out the dramas of love.

A PASTORAL HYPOTHESIS

PETER E. FINK

It was Gay Pride Week and the Church stayed home . . .

Suppose they gave a civil rights parade and the Church stayed home. A few months ago they did, and to all appearances at least the Church stayed home. It is strange when you consider the visible presence of the Church in the early sixties when priests and nuns and lay Catholics added their voices quite openly to the general cry for racial justice. It is strange when you consider the visible presence of the Church in the late sixties and early seventies when priests and nuns and lay Catholics added their voice openly to the general cry for peace rather than war, for life rather than death. It is strange, finally, when you consider that the consciousness of the Church today is quite openly directed towards justice for minority groups and liberation for the oppressed. Gay Pride Week, 1972, and the Church stayed home.

The question which gave rise to this essay is one which as a priest I have asked myself for several years. What mission does the Church have toward gay people, and what service can it render? I ask it in the face of a history of neglect and condemnation, a history which has scarred individuals mercilessly and has caused far too many to drift from the Church and her sacraments with the sense of being unwanted, and a history which has not brought judgment against society at large for its injustice toward gay people, but rather has contributed its own share to that injustice. Yet I ask it because my own life in the Church, before and through the seminary and now as a priest, has fostered a sensitivity to the message and claim of the gospel which somehow reminds us that gay people too are "worth more than many sparrows."

To be honest, there is a note of confession here which even as I write induces a sense of awkwardness, regret, and some embarrassment. Though I came very close to marching, collar and all, I too stayed home, and the reasons I offered to excuse myself were as ingenious as they were hollow. Perhaps I only reflected in myself the tensions which face anyone in the Church who would speak out for our gay brothers and sisters, and the tensions of the Church itself as it struggles to bring together its history and its contemporary sensitivities.

I call this essay a *pastoral* hypothesis for I am concerned here far more with a program of action than with a theological theory. This is not to imply that pastoral

action can proceed independently of sound theology. Quite the contrary. What I do insist, however, is that pastoral activity should never lie dormant until complex theological questions are resolved with Cartesian clarity. There are times when the Church must act with a certain tentativeness, guided more by intuition and an unprogrammed response to the gospel than by logical continuity with its theological tradition. In fact such pastoral action adds data for theological reflection and can often help the theologian move beyond a point of logical impasse.

I call this hypothesis *pastoral* for another reason. I am concerned here far less with the question of homosexuality than with the lives of people who, for whatever reason, happen to be homosexual. My fear is that the priorities of the Church have for too long been the reverse and that the unresolved nature of the question was one of the reasons why the Church stayed at home. As to the question, it is clear that, on the subjective moral level at least, an absolute condemnation of homosexual love is untenable. It is also clear that an absolute approval of all forms of homosexual activity is likewise untenable. Between the two extremes the debate moves on. In the meantime the lives of gay people are subject to countless forces which are clearly destructive and which quite definitely stand under the judgment of Christ's gospel.

The term *hypothesis* also calls for some explanation. The question of homosexuality becomes more complex the more one investigates it. Theologians, psychiatrists and social scientists pool resources and are unable to come up with a consensus as to its nature, its cause, or, if such there be, its cure. The only firm conclusion seems to be that homosexuals have been around in every generation and there is no indication that they are about to go away.

Using a model drawn from William Lynch's *Christ and Prometheus*, I would like to propose that the Church in its pastoral activity enter gay society on its own terms and ask of gay people only that they be true to themselves. Gay society holds that homosexual love is a valid form of human love. I propose that the Church explore the hypothesis that this is true, and ask of homosexual relationships only that they be truly human and truly love. In return the Church will offer all its resources and all its critical judgment to this same end, that gay

FATHER PETER E. FINK, S.J., is a doctoral candidate in theology at Emory University.

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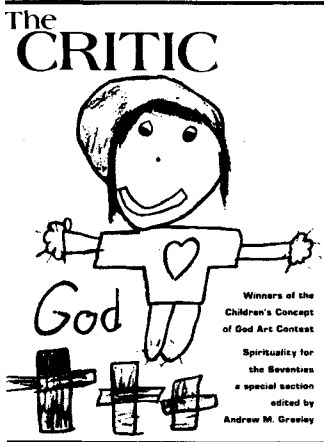
Surely the American Irish have changed since James T. Farrell painted their picture in the *Chicago* of the 20's. Not so, says sociologist Andrew Greeley. Only the veneer has changed: "They are as bent on their own destruction as were Studs and all of his friends who preceded him to the grave." You'll read the gory details in "The American Irish Since the Death of Studs Lonigan."

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"Aunt Anna was the youngest of the Herr girls. When I knew her, she was about five feet in height and weighed several hundred pounds. She also had a mustache and more than a suggestion of a beard (kissing her was considered perilously beyond the call of duty by my brothers and me). Before my time Anna had married Joe. The added responsibility brought on by marriage turned Joe sickly and he quickly gave up the rigors of daily work. After awhile, Joe wasn't even up to the rigors of daily life and he quietly passed on. Aunt Anna's claim to fame was that she may well have been the only guest of the Little Sisters of the Poor who was thrown out within twelve hours of her welcome. And it was all a slight misunderstanding. She was debating with a Sister about keeping her luggage under her bed and to stress how strongly she felt about the matter she crowned the Sister with an umbrella. What else could one woman do?"

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society become and remain truly human. This will involve a certain intellectual suspension of the current question in the hope that by so doing it will contribute to its eventual resolution.

It is precisely such an hypothesis that took me into gay society almost a year ago, and it is on the basis of that journey, more than what I have read or heard, that I speak. Gay society is a ghetto society with its own values and inner dynamic, its own forces of both creativity and destruction. It is in many ways a different culture which cannot be understood from without. Gay people are forced to live a schizoid existence, acting one way when in straight society and only relaxing when among their own.

I deliberately frame the hypothesis in terms of gay society. There are already a good number of sensitive priests working with individual gays who have managed to convey both the blessing and the judgment of the gospel in a way that leads to growth. The same cannot be said for gay society. It exists in alienation, with practically no lines of communication with the Church or its gospel.

There is a very practical prenote I would offer to anyone who would explore this hypothesis. He had better understand his own sexuality very well. If he is gay, he should not be afraid to admit it; if he is not, he need not pretend that he is. He enters as a human being who is concerned for other human beings, and this human involvement is too sacred and too serious for him to be threatened, whether by uncertainty within himself, by resentment from within gay circles, or by fear and misunderstanding from without. Both of these latter he will find in abundance.

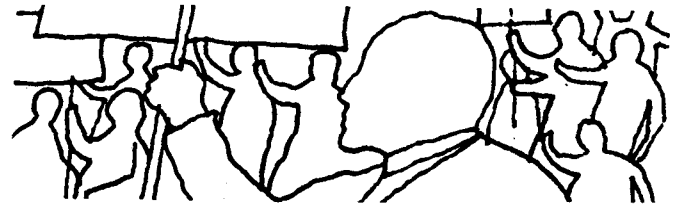
It should be noted that I do not have in mind here any esoteric theories either of love or of the human. By love I simply mean a giving and trusting relationship between two people which has some stability and is capable of growth. By human I mean the freedom to be oneself without need for masks or games, the freedom of others to be the same, and a relationship that is rooted in that mutual freedom without the need to possess or control. The forces of destruction that impinge on gay people are countless, and for the purposes of this exploration I list some of them in three groupings: personal, within gay society, and within society at large.

I will mention but a single personal force that is destructive in the lives of far too many gays. Call it guilt, lack of self-acceptance, self-hatred. This is not independent of other forces, for it is difficult to love oneself in a society that marks you as being somehow strange. But here I am concerned simply with the inability so many have to accept themselves as gay and the torture and agony this inability produces. The journey out of the "closet" is a terrifying one, for it brings with it the possibility of rejection from family, Church and friends. Very seldom is there an available voice that says simply,

"It's all right, I love you as you are."

Yet the Church proclaims a gospel which insists that this is the message which has been revealed to us. The God in whom we believe has said precisely that. God accepts and loves each person, not for some unreal projection of what they might be, but as they are.

For a minister of God's Word to walk into gay society is to proclaim that Christ belongs there. God does not draw the same lines of exclusion that man does. For a minister to proclaim that God loves each of us where we are requires that he lend the flesh and blood of his own love to that Word. In practice this may involve spending hours with someone whose lover has just left him, or simply holding one who is afraid and alone. It may mean gathering groups of gays together who can help each other understand and accept themselves. Or



it may mean bringing straights and gays together in prayer, discussion and social relaxation to remind all of us that who we are as people is far more important than our sexual preference.

Self-hatred is destructive of love. I would suggest that the prime mission of the Church to the individual homosexual is to help him love and accept himself, to teach him that God loves and accepts him in the way a sacramental Church must, by showing him that the human beings who form the Church and preach the Word of love do love and accept him as he is. In short, the Church should become in fact, and not merely in word, a home for gay people too.

The second area where the Church could speak concerns the inner dynamics of gay society itself. In an article of this length I can consider only a few of these destructive forces. For the sake of naming them, I call them the element of fantasy, the terror of insecurity and the flight from growing pains.

A friend of mine once described a gay bar as a place where lonely men stand around endlessly awaiting their Prince Charming. Though there are traces of this in most places, this is by no means an adequate description of the scene. But there is a more prevalent fantasy that dominates gay society, the fantasy of youth and physical beauty. More books are read by their proverbial covers in the gay scene than perhaps anywhere else. If a good-looking young man enters a bar, conversation stops.

This in itself is not destructive, for beauty is worth a moment's pause and admiration wherever it appears. However, it becomes destructive when the roving eye prevents human interactions from moving beyond the

superficial. Where the search into another stops on the surface, it is impossible to explore the human depth and inner beauty which alone fosters true love.

Recently I attended a meeting of *Dignity*, a group of "Catholic homophiles and concerned heterophiles." We discussed this need to bring gays together in a setting where they could share themselves as people and get away from the cruising atmosphere that permeates most gay spots. Such meetings could be of profound service in bringing gays to deeper levels of love and human possibility and help destroy the fantasy that life is over when physical beauty fades. The Church could be very instrumental here. Local parishes could establish meeting places where gays could manifest themselves without fear of rejection, where they could share each other's hopes, fears, problems, etc., and where they could meet together with other members of the parish in an effort at mutual growth and understanding. Eventually, though I am afraid this would be a long way off, they might even structure social events where gays and straights could be at home together, thus providing a viable alternative to the bar scene.

The second, more serious force of destruction I call the terror of insecurity. Most gays I have met long to form a stable love union with another person. However, the pressures against such stability are so great as to make it almost impossible. In some cases the pressures are predominantly internal and psychological. In other cases it is simply that gay people do not really know how to go about it. Society offers no help, and gay society itself has become so imbued with a sense of the transience of love-relationships that its own inner dynamic works against the very thing gay people long for. It is very beautiful to see a couple who have lived together for ten or fifteen years, but such instances are rare. All too often relationships are built on false securities, securities of the moment, and such relationships, wherever they are formed, are doomed to collapse.

In the past several years the Church has developed various fora for heterosexual married couples to grow both in love and in faith. Perhaps the Church could extend such service to gay couples as well. This would involve counseling that takes the gay couple and their attempts at a love union with radical seriousness. It could extend to the area of retreats, encounter weekends, times of prayer and frank discussion where the union could grow and develop under values that are far more sound than those which at present permeate gay society.

A creative voice of the Church within gay society could challenge those values which are in fact destructive and offer healthy guidance for relationships based on trust, openness and love, relationships that are grounded in an ever growing faith in God. The assumption has been that only heterosexual relationships can mediate the presence of God. At the present state of the question of homosexuality, it would be unthinkable to suggest that

homosexual love can also mediate God's loving presence. Under the hypothesis suggested here, however, such a suggestion becomes not only thinkable, but one that deserves serious exploration. We are dealing with a double mystery when we speak of God mediating himself through human love, and we should always exercise caution in deciding *a priori* what mystery can or cannot contain.

A third, and related force of destruction I call the flight from growing pains. In gay relationships the moment of dissolution is all too often a moment of pain, the kind of pain that leads to growth which enters every human love-relationship. I have not sensed in gay society a voice of wisdom that reminds gay people that love only grows through pain, and that to run from pain, as is all too often the case, is in fact to run from growth. Our hypothesis stated that homosexual love is a valid form of human love. Under that hypothesis, then, gay love would be subject to all the growth dynamics that confront any form of human love. Through the witness of sensitive and encouraging people the Church can and should serve as that voice of wisdom.

One of the most destructive forces acting on gay people, and here I move toward the third area mentioned above, i.e., forces from society, is isolation in a closed ghetto world. Earlier I suggested that the Church become a community of welcome for gay people, and later that it become a critical voice within gay society. Both suggestions call for a shattering of the ghetto walls. More than anything else this phrase captures for me the prime need on the part of gay people and the principal service the Church can and should render: help tear the ghetto walls down.

Why does the ghetto exist? First of all, gay people need a place they can feel at home, where they can openly display affection, dance, relate as human beings without the need to pretend that they are something they are not. Secondly, there is at present need for protection, from harassment, from prejudice, from misunderstanding, from the behavior of some which can only be called malicious. Thirdly, there are forces of exploitation of gays by gays, not unlike exploitation of any minority group of members of that minority who can profit by such. This last is a force within gay society itself which jealously guards the ghetto walls. I know of one case in a major city where the GLF (Gay Liberation Front) recently boycotted a gay bar for precisely such exploitation.

Here is an area where the Church can lend a political as well as a pastoral hand. The ghetto walls will come down only when gay people receive full recognition and welcome as human beings in society beyond the ghetto. That was the simple demand of the march during Gay Pride Week. That is what gay people were asking when the Church stayed home.

A first educational step which the Church even now

could take would be to dispel the fear, prejudice and ignorance all too many have about gay people. Gays live under the curse of the stereotype, and I can think of no stereotype that is not pejorative. Even the common terms, fairy, pansy, queer, etc., can hardly be called neutral terms. Some equate homosexual with Communist or hippie; others with the exaggerated limp-wrist that often evokes a nervous laugh on the less sophisticated TV comedies. Still others see the gay person as a child-molester or a corrupter of youth. All this is nonsense. Gay people are human beings with all the hopes, fears and yearnings of anyone else. To reduce any human being to an abstract category or a stereotype and to pass judgment on the basis of such abstractions is the height of injustice.

This has been a brief exploration of a hypothesis that itself will disturb many people. And this is good, for it offers a concrete place for us to begin. The reasons some might be disturbed are the very focus of destruction I have been speaking about, forces which need serious re-evaluation. If we are to become a community of welcome, we have to begin with the forces in ourselves which foster injustice, which keep the walls high and the doors of welcome shut.

It may seem a slap in our collective rational face to explore this unproven hypothesis. It really is not. In the absence of a definite *a priori*, it is a valid theological method to explore hypotheses and judge their validity on the basis of their consequences. If homosexual love is sinful, this will show itself as destructive of true love, destructive of the human and as disruptive of man's relationship with God. All I ask here is that the Church employ all its resources in an honest attempt to lead gay people to love, to the human and to God *through* their homosexuality. I ask that it try to discover and counter all that is in fact destructive in the lives of gay people and help them grow. If every effort proves futile, so be it. The theological stalemate will be advanced a bit toward resolution by this very fact. In the meantime, gay people will find the Church offering guidance and welcome rather than rejection and neglect.

HURRAHS AND WHISPERS



THE SCREEN

If you could really judge a man by the company he keeps, movie directors might be judged by the critics who admire them. Ingmar Bergman, for instance, could be held responsible for being liked by John Simon in *Ingmar Bergman Directs* (Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, \$9.95). For years Simon has been bleating about Great

Art, anointing some filmmakers with his oily praise and condemning others for not being Great Artists. But he has never been willing—or able?—to say what Great Art is. If he was ever going to define himself as a critic and give substance to all those gratuitous judgment he's made, this Bergman book was the place to do so. But the book never even says what's great about Bergman, let alone what greatness itself might be. Simon goes through long, pointless analyses of four Bergman films without ever writing a chapter to say just what it is Bergman's films have in common that he admires.

Simon begins his discourse with the pronouncement, "Ingmar Bergman is, in my most carefully considered opinion, ..." But who can care how a statement begun this way might end? That non-restrictive phrase has already made plain that Simon is merely going to argue *ab homine*, as if the force of his own character would persuade us where the weakness of his insight cannot. Yet it's not fair to blame Bergman for Simon. Asking a director what critic he wants to speak for him is like hauling a man before an Un-American Activities Committee and asking him what Communists he'd like to be linked with. I can't think of any critic whose companionship would be a credit to the director of his choice. The only thing that Simon's book makes clear is that Bergman can get along without Simon's praise, for in the interview with which the book opens Bergman proves he is his own best apologist. In light of Bergman's latest film, *Cries and Whispers*, several of the remarks made in that interview seem significant.

When asked about the "central theme" of his work, Bergman talked about what might more properly be called his film's central action: "I want very much to tell, to talk about, the wholeness inside every human being. It's a strange thing that every human being has a sort of dignity or wholeness in him, and out of that develops relationships to other human beings, tensions, misunderstandings, tenderness, coming into contact, touching and being touched, the cutting off of contact and what happens then. That's what is fascinating." Bergman's films have always been concerned with revealing this inner wholeness through its outward signs—through the ways in which people touch each other and are touched. His films have tried to strip away from human experience everything except the kind of elemental contact he was talking about in the interview. Even the titles—*The Communicants*, *Persona*, *Shame*, *The Passion of Anna*, *The Touch*, and now *Cries and Whispers*—suggest his concern with primal human relationship.

It's not in name only that *Cries and Whispers* fits this pattern in Bergman's work. The film deals with the relationships among three sisters living in a great mansion sometime during the nineteenth century. The story focuses on Agnes (Harriet Andersson) who is dying

of cancer. She is the literal center of the story because the others are only there to care for her. But she is also the center symbolically because disease has reduced her life to purely physical kinds of pain and comfort that are the common denominator of all human experience in this film. Bergman presents her death agony so graphically that it seems intended to epitomize all the other varieties of pain that man can feel.

In this film as in past ones, Bergman relies heavily on his talented repertory company. It is because the central action of his films lies in gesticulation, in the slight pantomime of touching and grimace, that he must work with regulars this way. In order to get the fine distinctions of expression and the precision of gesture he wants, he needs actors and actresses he knows well enough to be able to control closely. This is the same reason that he uses tight close-ups so much of the time. The drama that interests him occurs on a subtle scale and cannot be seen at long range. Thus the way that Agnes' doctor touches her in the course of an examination seems similar to the way he caresses one of the other sisters, Maria (Liv Ullman), who used to be his mistress. Despite being a doctor, this man cannot help betraying a certain revulsion when he must come into contact with death. The physical interaction between him and Agnes tells us more than any dialogue could about her desperation to cling to life, and his fear that she will somehow grab him to do so. When he touches Maria with the same reluctance in the next scene, as she tries to revive their affair, we sense an emotional deadness in her as clearly as we did the approach of physical death in Agnes.

There are other, comparable moments of fondling in the film, but Bergman's passion for dramatizations of feeling doesn't stop at the boundaries of nuance and realism. The human contact is sometimes gross instead of subtle, and events that are supernatural or surreal can occur merely as a pretext for a more intense physicalizing of emotion. At these moments Bergman's technique often becomes awkward, like a game of charades in which the player resorts to contortions to get across his meaning without the aid of props or symbolism. In the new film, standing out like shouting among the cries and whispers, are two such scenes. In one, the survivors go into Agnes' room after her death to wrestle with her reanimated corpse. In the other the frigid third sister (Ingrid Thulin) inserts a sliver of glass in her vagina and spreads her bloody thighs for her husband. It is characteristic of Bergman's extreme austerity that the one prop he should allow his actresses—a sliver of glass, the same prop used in *Persona*—should be so minimal an object.

But even if Bergman at times relies too exclusively on performance, on acting out, he always remains a great director. Simon is right about that. When Berg-

man speaks of the "wholeness inside every human being" and of his fascination with the drama of "touching and being touched," the remark has a dual significance. It tells us about Bergman himself as much as his films. Consider how similar his reply was when Simon asked him about his personal satisfaction in filmmaking: "to express, to be in touch with other human beings. To mix experiences, to be involved; that's my life. If I am isolated or feel no contact . . . it is catastrophic for me."

We can say, then, that for Ingmar Bergman, the subject of his life and the subject of his films are much the same. The wholeness that he seeks in a character he achieves for himself through filmmaking. The mere similarity of the ways he talks about himself and his characters suggests his own "wholeness." To say that his films are about the problems that concern him most in life may seem rather simple. Don't we assume that this is true of all artists? I doubt that it is, though, especially in movies. The concerns of a Hitchcock movie can hardly be thought of as the concerns of Hitchcock's life: there is no "wholeness" there uniting the director and his work. Perhaps what makes Bergman's films *Great Art* is the way they give us a direct and immediate access to the man who made them.

COLIN L. WESTERBECK, JR.



FRANCIS W. SWEENEY

THE COLLECTOR: MONDRAGONE

In his attic room a Bedlam choir of clocks
Crowded out life.
With time the tenant
And himself a cramped intruder.

Knowing no other prudence or care,
Not mad, but gathering all his wit into this elf's desire
He oiled and tuned them, and gave them back
Their dignity of varnish and gilding.

He taught them to chime together,
And woke each hour in the night
Like a lord naming the spires in the barony.

Then he set them to strike, each for a different city,
And that was the last of his fancies,
For one night he wandered out of time
And did not wake to four o'clock in Boston,
Nine in London,
Eleven in Khartoum.

THE STAGE

Once again Broadway stands in debt to the regional theater. Michael Rudman's excellent production of David Storey's *The Changing Room* has come down from the Long Wharf in New Haven to give New York the best theater it has had this season.

Storey's new play is a return to a form and a subject matter that have served him well before, a homecoming, one might say, after a successful foray into Pinter country in *Home*, the only earlier play of his to be seen in provincial New York. His subject in *The Changing Room* is the footballers of the Rugby League, a brutal, professional game played by and for the workers in the North of England; it is the material of Storey's novel and screenplay, *This Sporting Life*. The form of the new play is very like that of *The Contractor*, which I think is the best of Storey's plays to date. In that play, a group of workers spends the first act setting up a tent for a lawn wedding reception, and the third act taking it down. In the second act, the tent is the scene for the unraveling of the family whose closeness might be implied by the celebratory setting and occasion (an earlier Storey play on a similar subject is called *In Celebration*). The play, as a whole, is a portrait of the workers as well as the family and it contains, as so much of Storey's work does, a tentative condemnation of the texture of life today. *The Changing Room* is, structurally, an almost exact copy of *The Contractor*. The first act finds the team getting ready for the game; the second catches them in process, showing off-field activity while the game is on and the exhausted players at the half; and the third shows them dressing after the game and leaving the deserted changing room to the cleaner, for a reprise of the rather corny sweeping scene which opens the play.

There is something old-fashioned about Storey's work, a preoccupation with the exact detail, the proper tone of his setting and subject; it is almost a throw-back to the realism of the early twentieth century. Gorki comes to mind, probably because Ellis Raab's production of *Enemies* at the Lincoln Center is the only thing I have seen this season that approaches the theatrical quality of *The Changing Room*. Yet Gorki's group-portrait is hung on a melodramatic frame. In Storey's case, the action is minimal; there is not even a central character, as there is in *This Sporting Life*, to serve as hero, victim and focus of the social situation. One player—the slow-witted Kenny, the likable butt of much of the locker-room kidding—has his nose broken, but the injury is an incident not an event; the rhythm of the game, the movement of the play simply ride over

the accident, encompassing it, refusing to isolate it as any kind of denouement. Nor is the victory of the team a dramatic climax; although it pleases both the players and the owner, it can hardly be an important end to a play and a situation which are essentially circular.

I would be tempted to call *The Changing Room* a slice-of-life play if I were not in danger of mixing metaphors (slice, circle). It simply presents the team and its accessories (owner, club secretary, trainers, masseur) on the afternoon of the weekly game. The talk is apparently random, undirected, the joking chatter one might expect in any dressing room, with a heavy emphasis on horseplay in which the affectionate teasing occasionally opens up to reveal animosity under the jocularity. The language is casually obscene (*bloody* punctuates almost every sentence) and sexual banter noses out complaints, real or feigned, as the chief impulse of the conversation. Very quickly, individual figures rise out of the group portrait, bits of biography, hints of personal troubles and family distress wash up on the impersonal shores of the group. These are used, however, not to identify characters who must perform plot business but to suggest the setting outside the changing room, a life in which this underpaid and ugly afternoon's work is a high, almost happy point. The first act and even more the third, with the tremendous sense of release in the shower-room antics, are contrasted with the pain, dirt and exhaustion of the second, the reality of the game which is forgiven or forgotten in the total context of the importance of Saturday. The social comment in the play is minimal—coming out only in one conversation about the good old days and in the amiable satire of the cleaner's fear of *Roosia*—but just beyond the cheerful changing-room kidding the audience can glimpse bleakness.

It is that glimpse, presumably, and all the verbal implications of a changing room with no real changes that lie at the heart of Storey's play. In the theater, however, it is the marvelous vitality of the players and the realization of them, as individuals and as a group, that are the making of the play, and it is the embodiment of that group that is the triumph of this production. It is an old reviewing habit to single out this performer or that for special applause, but the fineness of this production is that it would violate the sense of ensemble to hand out particular praise. To my eye and to my American ear, all the performers move, speak and gesture to create the nuances of individuality within an overall sense of shared place and activity. It is probably the highest compliment to the production of *The Changing Room* that the show's nudity, which has been getting some silly publicity, is no way naughtily disruptive; it is simply another realistic touch in a production which uses prop, setting and performers in the interest of the play as an artistic whole.

GERALD WEALES

BOOKS

Harrisburg: picking up the pieces

The F.B.I. and the Berrigans

JACK NELSON &
RONALD J. OSTROW

Coward, McCann & Geoghegan \$7.95

The Harrisburg 7 and the New Catholic Left

WILLIAM O'ROURKE

Crowell, \$6.95

Absurd Convictions, Modest Hopes:

Conversations After Prison with Lee Lockwood

DANIEL BERRIGAN

Random House, \$7.95

ROBERT BLAIR KAISER

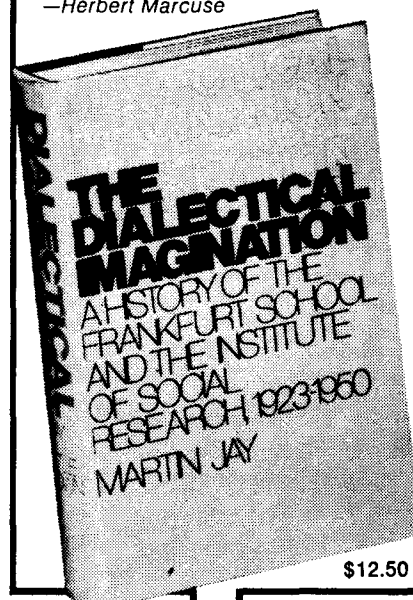
In the trial of the Harrisburg Seven, write Jack Nelson and Ron Ostrow, John Mitchell's Justice Department manipulated the legal machinery of the government for crassly political purposes—disregarding both the facts and the Bill of Rights in the process. Well, maybe the government did. I'm inclined to suspect it did, but I don't think Nelson and Ostrow really prove it. I wish they had. I think they could have.

Nelson and Ostrow are crack reporters for the Washington Bureau of *The Los Angeles Times*. They scoop their colleagues in the Washington Press Corps at least once a month. They were the ones who dug up Alfred C. Baldwin, the ex-FBI man who served as a lookout for Mitchell's Watergate crowd and persuaded him to talk, on tape, for publication. They know a story when they see one and they work for a paper that can afford to send them anywhere they want to go. But the story here involved no travel to speak of: just a series of persistent trips to the Justice Department. And, while there is evidence in the book

that Ostrow picked up a lot of gossip about J. Edgar Hoover on the F.B.I. beat, there is no indication that either Nelson or Ostrow ever confronted the policymakers at Justice with their principal charge: that the prosecutors did their dirty work in an effort to make J. Edgar Hoover's unfair charges stick. Who ordered them to do this? Why? Did Nelson and Ostrow try to interview John Mitchell or Dick Kleindienst or Robert Mardian? Were they turned down? How? Why? I'd like to know. Or are these men the kind of men you do not ask for interviews? Or the kind of men you do not believe if they tell you the sun will rise in the East tomorrow morning? I'd like to know that, too. It is the kind of information I (and the people-at-large) need to know in order to exercise our citizenship in a democracy. It's why we need the press and it is why the press enjoys its freedoms under the First Amendment.

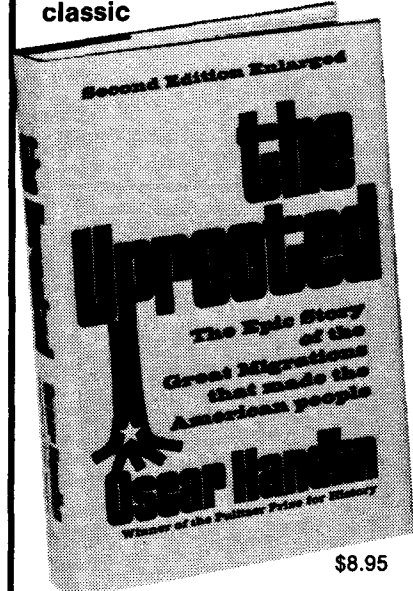
Both Nelson and Ostrow are Nieman Fellows. To them, journalism isn't just a job, but, by force of habit and the traditions of the newspaper business, they tend to think the people-at-large aren't interested in the news-gathering process. I am here to tell them we are. I also think the process needs some improving. My guess is that if Nelson and Ostrow didn't get the interviews they (probably) requested from the Justice Department, it was because Mitchell and Co. knew they'd come so well prepared that Mitchell and Co. couldn't sidestep important questions without giving the game away. There ought to be a remedy here and I'm inclined to think it lies in the area of general press power. If one member of the Washington Press Corps gets the run around, then there ought to be some sort of informal action plan: the rest of the Press Corps ought to take up the cry against the man or the agency giving the run

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around. The Washington Press Corps has a good deal more power than it knows, if it would only dare use it. Or is Corps changed now into c-o-r-p-s-e?

Until that corpse quickens, a single reporter on a beat in Washington has an excuse not to become too obstreperous. If he does, he might not be able to cover his beat any longer. All the more reason, in the meantime, for others to come in and do their off-beat best to take up the slack. Fortunately, in the matter of the Harrisburg Seven (whose names are well known by the readers of this journal and bear no special recitation), we are lucky enough to have another account between hard covers in the work of William O'Rourke. O'Rourke brings an entirely different set of tools to his analysis: the eye and ear of a novelist, the insights of a poet, the awareness of a Christian contemplative—and no desire to make his living as a reporter (though I wish he did!). The result is a most readable history of a crazy case, one that comes very close to telling us how in the hell a supposedly intelligent group of government attorneys and these supposedly intelligent Catholic radicals ever came to grips in Harrisburg.

O'Rourke is taken with the mythic dimensions of the whole thing. "Church and State," he writes, "are the practitioners of myth and ikon. The activists of the Catholic New Left carry out their symbolic acts of resistance; the government, the dark half of that dualism, responds with its own." In the Spock trial, the government went after academics and intellectuals. In the trial of the Chicago Seven, it went after the unkempt and unruly masses, the youth mob. And at Harrisburg, writes O'Rourke, it went after "the Spirit, the Word, the fanatic Church, those who attack the Pharisees. "The trials are visions the ruling elite has in its darkest hours: professors urging armies to mutiny; youths organizing other youths into armies of destruction, to vandalize the world; priests and nuns summoning their congregations to revenge wrongs, banish rulers, destroy false gods. Each

of the trials has outlined a sector, isolated an allegorical circle."

And so, with the vision, O'Rourke comes on like some kind of modern Milton to narrate the clash, not between simple good and evil, but between two forces seemingly enslaved by their symbols. It is a good thing for his story that the symbols are mighty, however, because the forces, as O'Rourke sees them, are a poor, weak and bumbling lot.

Judge Herman is "an American bestiary; he is a Moose, a Lion, a Mason" and all the rest. And apparently something of a donkey besides. During a minute of silent prayer for one of the defense attorneys who had died on the eve of the trial, O'Rourke observes Judge R. Dixon Herman, presiding judge. "Wary of all the previous infringements on his authority, [he] poured himself a glass of water. The moment of silence was filled with the roar of rushing water."

William S. Lynch, the chief government prosecutor and a Catholic (all the government attorneys at the trial and apparently all the F.B.I. men on the case were Catholics), had "a tallow candle face that requires him to be lit with anger before it gains my color." O'Rourke says he flies into "characteristic rage" when, before the trial, he finds that someone is taking movies of him while he is interviewing a potential witness on the campus at Catholic University in Washington.

The jurors, by legal fiat, are distinguished in no way. When the trial begins, O'Rourke wonders whether the judge has sequestered a hair dresser along with the jury. "All the women jurors have had their hair done in high style; in their box they all look new, like yellow No. two pencils at the beginning of a school year."

As for the defendants, O'Rourke has his eye cocked most critically at Sister Elizabeth McAlister, a revolutionary who wears a girdle to court every day and whose self-dramatizing letters to Phil Berrigan provide the prosecution with their best "documentation" of a conspiracy. O'Rourke doesn't like her style. She aggrandizes simple clichés

and the result is "prose as cumbersome and redundant" as her former habit. O'Rourke has a last recollection of her in Harrisburg, backing a rent-a-truck into a no parking sign. "It twanged," wrote O'Rourke, "like a struck tuning fork." It is hard to end up liking Sister Elizabeth.

But it is immensely harder to like Boyd F. Douglas, the government informer, for, by O'Rourke's account, Boyd is a congenital loser who concocts a conspiracy for the overeager F.B.I. out of almost nothing. As O'Rourke tells it, Boyd will do almost anything for money. When serving the first of a series of prison terms, Boyd volunteered for a National Institute of Health experiment and NIH gave him something like the eighth plague of Egypt. Boyd makes the most of this:

Boyd develops lingering and recurring sores. Boyd has actualized his leper status. NIH had distilled Boyd's life, mixed it with the water of his mother's grave, added the sweat from his father's pipelines, the thin oil of his jalopy wanderings, and gave it back to him, a silver bullet. Boyd was vaccinated against himself. Lingering sores. Boyd ruminates over his scabs, his fingers contemplate their edges. He becomes a mystic of crustation, a connoisseur of the healing process. He knows best when it can be frustrated, the time just before it succeeds. They are going to pay for this. The lower classes in America have one source of capital whispered into their ears since birth. I have heard it. A one-syllable admonition, the alchemy of the poor, when suffering can be turned into gold. It issues from their lips, the other side of lament: sue. Sue. SUE! Sue the bastards, the rich. Get a lawyer.

But Boyd is more victim than villain. For that role, I nominate the man who got McAlister and Berrigan started on the idea of kidnapping Kissinger, Eqbal Ahmad. What about Ahmad, the professed revolutionary who on one of O'Rourke's pages is humiliated among some Algerians at the United Nations because they wonder "how he, an ex-

pert on counter insurgency warfare, could get mixed up with this wacky group of nuns and priests?" I'd like to know more about Ahmad, who was acquitted at Harrisburg for lack of strict legal evidence, but is obviously the man who planted insane seed among the simpleminded.

Ahmad was a friend of Dan Berrigan. According to Lee Lockwood, he helped organize Berrigan's underground activities when Dan was a fugitive from the F.B.I. There is no clue in Berrigan's conversations with Lockwood how Ahmad got mixed up with the New Catholic Left. For that matter, there isn't much of a clue there how Berrigan got mixed up with it either.

In My Own Way

ALAN WATTS

Pantheon, \$7.95

Journey to Ixtlan

CARLOS CASTANEDA

Simon and Schuster, \$6.95

JOSEPH GRANGE

For more than a quarter century, Alan Watts has been serving as America's *guru*. To those familiar with his other writings (he has written over twenty books) *In My Own Way*, an autobiographical account that covers the years 1915 to 1965, provides little fresh insight into the meaning and importance of Eastern ways of thought. Except—and it is a troubling exception—that Alan Watts has enjoyed every minute of the fame and glamour that has come his way. By their very nature, most autobiographies suffer from name-dropping, but there is a glossy, self-congratulatory tone to Watts' volume that borders on the cloying. The disturbing aspect of such indulgence is not so much the absence of taste as it is the notable lack of self-doubt in a life that must have had its difficult and disturbing moments. Even his resignation from the Episcopalian priesthood and his divorces are discussed in a dispassionate, analytic manner that is somehow quite chilling.

One is led to wonder what Watts' autobiography would have read like if all had not turned out so well.

But such reservations aside, *In My Own Way* merits attention for the superb way in which Watts communicates a vision of the self that stands opposed to the stimulus/response framework of much contemporary psychology. The significance of Watts' endeavor lies in his unyielding defense of the importance of metaphysics. By taking seriously the question of Being and Being Human, Watts has been able to construct an image of human reality that sets forth horizons of meaning instead of consumption charts as the destiny of man. As an antidote for an age dominated by a scientific mechanism that leaves uninvestigated all its ontological assumptions, Watts' effort is a worthy one.

Still, an emptiness pervades Watts' account of his existence: there is no register of the weight of Being and its unfathomable and terrifying possibilities. No such personal vacuum informs Carlos Castaneda's *Journey to Ixtlan*. As a young anthropology student, Castaneda encountered don Juan, a Yaqui Indian *brujo* (sorcerer), who instead of supplying the type of bland anthropological data required for professional research initiated him into the world of the witches. In effect, Castaneda became the "Sorcerer's Apprentice" and the results of that experience were recorded in his earlier books, *The Teachings of Don Juan* and *A Separate Reality*. The focus of those works centered about the psychic effects of hallucinogenic drugs; as a result, the way of being human set forth by don Juan was neglected in favor of the importance of drugs for entering states of non-ordinary reality. *Journey to Ixtlan*, subtitled "The Lessons of Don Juan," restores to its proper place



REVIEWERS

ROBERT BLAIR KAISER is the author of *R.F.K. Must Die*.

JOSEPH GRANGE is an assistant professor of philosophy at the University of Maine at Portland.

the World-Vision underlying the conduct of this remarkable man's personal existence.

For don Juan the world ordinarily encountered by human awareness is a shrunken, withered version of what really is there for experience. The causes of this poverty of vision are to be traced back to the implicit contract each human makes with his social world when he assumes membership in it. With the contract established, all the meanings that will be assigned to events occurring within that world are more or less set. Undoing the contract through erasing personal history and losing self-importance are the first negative steps towards entering a richer and fuller world. The positive aspect of don Juan's lessons in learning to "see" the world entails enlarging the sphere of vision through naive wonder concerning the meaning of events that surround us.

With the social contract broken, a torrent of experience floods human consciousness. At that moment, the

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danger of personal disintegration arises and an advisor is required. The advisor is one's death for, as don Juan says, "... the only thing that is real is the being in you that is going to die." Each human must assume responsibility for the meaning of the world and must do so in the face of his death which will snuff out the light of awareness that enables him to see. The proper mode of being human is to assume the stance of the hunter who "uses his world sparingly and with tenderness . . ." Hunting meaning is not an aggressive act but a posture of openness, grounded in awareness of the equality and dignity of all things natural.

It is no secret that the Western World is in the grip of a cultural crisis. Spiritually, politically and ecologically, our institutions appear to be at the edge of exhaustion. Castaneda's courage in experiencing a world where meaning is the outcome of personal responsibility suggests an alternative path for human growth and development. In the place of "progress" as defined by scientism with its reductionist methodology, we would do well to insist upon the category of experience—unattended by arbitrary boundaries—as the touchstone for estimating the reach of being human. Martin Heidegger has claimed that Western Man confronts a Janus-faced future:

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our being-in-the-world can be either poetic or technological. Don Juan tells us his choice:

... my interest has been to convince you that you must assume responsibility for being here, in this marvelous world, in this marvelous desert, in this marvelous time. I wanted to convince you that you must learn to make every act count, since you are going to be here for only a short while; in fact, too short for witnessing all the marvels of it. Taken to heart, such wisdom can restore to contemporary man a sense of possibility that is worthy of the world in which he dwells. For too long a time, the tradition of civilized discourse has been usurped by the slogans of political rhetoric and the clichés of a mechanical world-view. The lessons of don Juan tell us that the world is as big as our psyche will allow. The future dimensions of our world, therefore, depend upon the generosity of our decisions.



Michael Novak (Cont.)

most powerful connection.

Again, people sometimes oppose "book learning" to "life." Yet surely the point of reading books is to bring about changes in oneself, so as to perceive more accurately, think more clearly, understand otherwise baffling materials more readily: the point of books is to open, not to close, one's soul to life. (At Old Westbury, we had more than enough students who regarded books as carriers of disease. One would have been more impressed if, without books, they had shown signs of superior life. They seemed, instead, to be casualties of the restless, mobile, self-alienated life of modernity.)

Our intellectual professionals (the hundreds of thousands of college teachers, e.g.) have a lot to answer for in these respects. Guardians of our spirit,

how contemptuous and blind they have often been to so many cultures and persons in our midst. They work, of course, within a hidden but potent class structure, within a self-complacent cultural stream, and within an economic system that disrupts families, neighborhoods, and living cultures. Even if our intellectuals were saints, they would not be able to save us; intellectuals alone are not enough. Though rhetorically many of them blame others for the ills of our culture (businessmen, middle Americans, the churches, television, Archie Bunker), they do not themselves give the human spirit bread. It is sometimes hard to distinguish them from hucksters, from those who hold common people in contempt.

Why should a Foundation be interested in the humanities? Because the money on which Foundations are built comes from the sweat and toil and suffering and trust of real people. Wealth did not accumulate by magic: there were live human beings in those mines, factories, and fields. A Foundation committed to "helping mankind" can well begin by helping human beings become conscious of the dignity that lies within them, hidden as it may be by social disesteem, years of self-hatred, or ignorance.

A major program in the new humanities is surely urgent when many recognize that it is not wealth, nor technology, nor physical resources our civilization lacks—but a vision of humanity that unites the hearts of all in common enterprise. Precisely the human qualities seem most missing in our civilization. No one can doubt our power or our affluence. But our wisdom? Our mutual understanding or compassion or joy in living?

One purpose of a humanities program in a Foundation, I would guess, is to elicit from the actual lives of people—particularly in neglected areas of human life—those qualities that make a civilization worth living in. If the institutions that should be doing that job are not doing it, one ought to look for ways to bring them to their senses. Or to find other institutions

that might better do the job.

A major first task is to examine influential forms of modern life—including those professions like medicine, law, journalism, the sciences—that shape all who enter them in certain ways of perceiving and acting. A new conception of the humanities must be international in its sensitivities, and catholic in its respect for the concrete texture of the various ways in which human beings actually live today. Much that was ignored by the old humanities needs to be inquired into, articulated, and criticized, within a major new intellectual transformation. Only under such a transformation will the humanities be faithful to what is happening to humans in our era.

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(Continued from page 99)

bined with a new anthropology which regards sexual experience as necessary for full human development. The results of trying to combine a continuing identity as a celibate, with unthought remnants of this psychology, and sexual relationships tends to dangerous contradictions. The anti-sexuality and misogyny inherent in the traditional celibate viewpoint means that the male celibate tends to handle such relations by depersonalizing the woman. This 'Third Way' is hardly a 'new way.' It is a rather 'old way' indeed! No doubt some of these contradictions are unavoidable as long as the Church leadership refuses to discuss the problem. But we must begin to think through new kinds of religious community and an anthropology suitable to new social relationships.

2) Secondly, my main critical purpose in this essay was to show that celibacy is not the best symbol for what the Bible means by prophetic or 'eschatological' witness. Originally this meant a radical disaffiliation with existing *political* institutions in order to show the contradictions between human ways and God's demands and to witness to that New World where peace and jus-

tice will reign; i.e., the Kingdom of God. The confusion of eschatological witness with a celibate ethic of sexual repression came about as a result of a fusion of the Biblical dualism of History and Eschatology with a Platonic dualism of the 'carnal' and the spiritual. This confusion has the effect of turning the exodus inward and shortcircuiting the real meaning of prophetic witness.

There are two stances which one may take in relation to the existing state of things. One stance is to hang in there and try to make the best of the situation within existing social structures. This is a historical stance. Its traditional symbol is marriage. In the New Testament the Christian minister is normatively married. This indicates that Christian ministry is thought of as historical ministry, not eschatological witness.

The second stance is that of the prophet who steps outside of existing social institutions and engages in real social risk for a time to witness to the clash between man's ways and God's demands. It may help to be unmarried to do this. But unmarried is not a practical necessity for it or an essential symbol of it. The Prophets often were married. The Zealots also were married. Their 'leaving wife and child' to take to the hills was a concrete experience of risk that risked one's real life. On the other hand, to institutionalize celibacy undercuts any content of radical witness. Celibate institutions are not designed to nurture prophets, but to create a monolithic form of institutional obedience. Institutional celibacy is neither a form nor carries any necessary content that makes it a gesture of prophetic witness. Celibacy, translated into institutional obedience, just as much as marriage, represents a commitment to historical institutions and the perpetuation of historical security systems. Eschatological witness does not have anything to do with being married or unmarried. It has to do with the prophetic gesture which steps outside of human institutions (including celibate institutions) to witness to the crisis of the times.

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